

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
April 28, 2009

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert Harvey
Tim Outhit
Reg Rankin
Peter Lund

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (a.m.)
Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer (p.m.)
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Barbara Coleman, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - APRIL 7 & 14, 2009

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that the minutes of April 7 & 14, 2009 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. TRANSPORTATION AND MUNICIPAL TAX STRUCTURE - MULTI-DWELLING CLARIFICATION

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Fiscal and Tax Policy, presented the report to Council noting the following:

- Status quo cannot stay,
- The urban transit boundary does not grow with transit service,
- The benefit is across the municipality with less traffic congestion on the roads, less pressure to widen the roads,
- Fewer greenhouse gases,
- Promotes economic growth,
- Everyone pays, or only those within a certain distance or a blend of both,
- All options have advantages and disadvantages,
- Status quo could work for a year if need be,
- Blend of everyone and a distance rule may help transition to a general tax rate on transit.

Councillor Walker received clarification that in order to put a new motion, the motion passed approving Option 2 - general rate using assessment had to be rescinded with a two thirds majority.

MOVED by Councillor walker, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that the motion that Council approve Option 2 - general rate using assessment be rescinded. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that Council approve Option 6 - Area Tax Rate (local) for those within a 3 km distance from a transit service and general tax rate (regional) using assessment for a period of one year.

Mayor Kelly assumed the Chair at 9:55 a.m.

During discussion on the motion, the following points were noted:

- This does not prevent tax reform from giving it a broader scope,
- This is an interim solution until tax reform,
- Option 6 meets all concerns while allowing for future expansion of transit service,
- This strikes a balance,
- Rural areas will not be included,
- The motion is contradictory to HRM by Design,
- There should be a charge for parking on the streets with funds going directly to transit,
- This is a modified option which will be reviewed in one year,
- The option is based on assessment,
- This is a compromise for one year and is based on assessment,
- Cannot agree with the amount taxes will be raised in some areas.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. EXPANDED RURAL TRANSIT OPTIONS

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to May 5, 2009 meeting.

5. CAPITAL PROJECTS RANKING

Mayor Kelly advised that there was Stimulus and Building Canada funding available to HRM and a response is required immediately. He further noted that the funds under the Stimulus package had to be fully expended by March 31, 2011 and this was non debatable.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Director, Finance advised there is funding from all three levels of government for economic stimulus from a program that totals \$117 million for the province. There is \$25 million from all three levels of government for the Building Canada Fund. The Stimulus fund needs to be spent by March 31, 2011, and the projects under the Building Canada Fund must be substantially complete by the end of 2015. She noted that the three priorities that are being recommended are the 4-Pad Arena project under the Stimulus funding and the Central Library and the Woodside Ferry under the Building Canada Fund. She noted staff would also submitting the remaining top twenty priority projects in case there are reallocations.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Johns, that Halifax Regional Council advance the 4-Pad Arena project as the project under the Stimulus funding. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

After receiving clarification that there was \$56 million available for HRM in the Building Canada Fund and after the funding for the Central Library and the Woodside Ferry there may be some additional funds available, Councillor Uteck placed the following

motion.

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Regional Council advance the Citadel Theatre Society (\$400,000) up after the Central Library and the Woodside Ferry.

For clarification, Ms. O'Toole advised that the \$400,000 would be the HRM amount required to fund the project.

Councillor Uteck withdrew her motion.

Council recessed at 12:10 p.m.

Council reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that Regional Council advance Transit in the Building Canada Fund for the following projects:

- New Woodside Ferry - \$12,000,000**
- Metro Link - \$10,200,000**
- Access A Bus Vehicle Expansion \$440,000**
- Conventional Transit Bus Expansion \$15,000,000**
- Rural Community Transit - \$11,000,000**

Discussion ensued with the following being noted:

- This recommendation is changing staffs position,
- The scoring matrix was approved by Council,
- The staff recommendation would allow the library to be built,
- The library comes first,
- All projects could be done in the next two years,
- Most of the projects are currently in the transit capital projects budget,
- This is the best way to get the most for the municipality,
- There is a lot of merit in doing these projects,
- There is a concern that the Province would have the ability to say that they contributed to transit,
- List should go forward without the Harbour Link,
- The need for cultural infrastructure is the library,

At the request of Councillor Streach, the mover and seconder agreed that the motion include the wording that the recommended projects as well as the entire list go forward to the Province for consideration.

The motion now reads.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that Regional

Council advance Transit in the Building Canada Fund for the following projects:

- New Woodside Ferry - \$12,000,000**
- Metro Link - \$10,200,000**
- Access A Bus Vehicle Expansion \$440,000**
- Conventional Transit Bus Expansion \$15,000,000**
- Rural Community Transit - \$11,000,000**

Further, the list of the additional projects go forward as part of the submission.

Councillor Streach noted that the item listed as Middle Musquodoboit High School Water and Sewer extension should only read Middle Musquodoboit Water and Sewer extension.

- Identified water service extensions should be included as part of the list,
- All parts of HRM must benefit to some degree,
- May not have the opportunity again to spread this fast throughout HRM,
- Transit is a higher priority than the library for most residents,
- Council should limit itself in what it puts forward,
- The central library would be a legacy project,
- The list should go the way it is with no priority identified,

At the request of Councillor Nicoll, the mover and seconder agreed to include security as one of the items under the request for funding.

The motion now reads.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that Regional Council advance Transit in the Building Canada Fund for the following projects:

- New Woodside Ferry - \$12,000,000**
- Metro Link - \$10,200,000**
- Access A Bus Vehicle Expansion \$440,000**
- Conventional Transit Bus Expansion \$15,000,000**
- Rural Community Transit - \$11,000,000**
- Transit Security - \$2,300,000**

Further, the list of the additional projects go forward as part of the submission.

- A central library is necessary for vibrancy and it will provide a landmark,
- When you increase the downtown population you have to increase amenities,
- If there was a shuttle service people would come downtown,
- Bike lanes should be a priority,
- All the transit projects are already in the five year transit plan.

On question from Mayor Kelly, Council was advised that the full library project would be at a cost of \$55 million with 3.429% of the HST not being refundable and would be included.

MOTION DEFEATED.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the Central Library and the New Woodside Ferry be advanced as the projects under the Building Canada Fund with HRM's share of funding being from debt funding.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the following motion was placed.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Smith that the rest of the Infrastructure List be forwarded as part of the submission. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The motion now reads:

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the Central Library and the New Woodside Ferry be advanced as the projects under the Building Canada Fund with HRM's share of funding being from debt funding and further the rest of the Infrastructure List, be included as part of the submission.

Without a vote being taken on the motion, Council agreed to hear the staff presentation on the Harbour Link.

Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager Strategic Transportation Planning, provided an overview on the Harbour Link proposal noting:

- There are some issues that prevent going ahead with the project - vessel classification and the Bedford waterfront timelines,
- There was a need to do more than conventional transit under the Regional Plan,
- Some work has been done on siting the terminal,
- Support for the ferry project remains strong,
- The ferry is important over and above the bus service,
- Gain economies of scale if you can accommodate a higher capacity with small number of staff,
- This would reduce the cost of bussing passengers downtown,
- Cost per trip would be one of the lowest of any ferry service in other parts of the country,
- Have potential partnerships to build ferry,
- Currently reviewing some of the operating criteria.

Discussion ensued with the following points being noted:

- Frees up infrastructure money if it is not included,
- Will reduce traffic on roads,
- The ferry will utilize the harbour as outlined in the Regional Plan,
- The ferry is a sound financial investment,
- It is efficient,
- It will reduce the road infrastructure needs,
- Have to look at downstream effects and spinoffs,
- No business case has been received and it is not achievable under the current business case,
- It may not be used daily but infrequent or casual basis,
- The project should be moved out and reviewed in five years,
- Have to make sure the ferry does not result in traffic grid lock for Bedford,
- Need to see the costs and what to expect when the weather is bad,
- The goal is to get people out of their cars and maximize transit.

In response to Councillor Hum, staff advised they would contact the representatives of the military to gain feedback on possible implications of the fast ferry service on naval operations in the Bedford Basin.

Councillor Uteck stated she wanted it noted for the record that Mr. McCusker concurred that the ferry did not need to go forward.

MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councilor Uteck, that the Harbour Link be excluded from the list going forward to the Province. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The amended motion now reads.

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the Central Library and the New Woodside Ferry be advanced as the projects under the Building Canada Fund with HRM's share of funding being from debt funding and further the rest of the Infrastructure List, excluding the Harbour Link, be included as part of the submission. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. HARBOUR LINK PROJECT UPDATE

The staff presentation and discussion was held on this item under the previous item.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Regional Council:

1. **Approve the amended Harbour Link Project Schedule dated March 31, 2009 (attachment 2 of the March 26, 2009 report)**
2. **Authorize staff to carry on negotiations with Transport Canada to establish an appropriate classification of vessel under which the Harbour Link vessels will operate,**
3. **Direct staff to review the vessel operating criteria and develop a detailed operating plan for the vessel routes,**
4. **Direct staff to update the available data on all other transit modes for carrying Bedford to Halifax trips to provide a balanced perspective to Council to facilitate informed decision making on the final transit solution,**
5. **Direct staff to bring all available information together into a comprehensive economic model for transporting passengers by transit from the Bedford area to Halifax in time for a decision on the 2010- 2011 Capital and Operating Budget.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Julia Horncastle
Acting Municipal Clerk